



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Carolina Women and Heart Disease

*First Lady Jenny Sanford Promotes Heart Disease Awareness
during American Heart Month*

Columbia, S.C. – February 12, 2009 – First Lady Jenny Sanford is a participant in the Go Red for Women Campaign- a movement created by the American Heart Association that is passionately dedicated to helping women fight back against heart disease. Mrs. Sanford, Kara Gormley from WIS-TV and Tre' Taylor, television and radio personality, are the spokeswomen for the first ever local media campaign aimed at raising awareness of heart disease in the Midlands.

Mrs. Sanford said, "I'm honored to help with this worthy cause. It's great to be involved with Kara Gormley and Tre' Taylor in support of such a motivating campaign that encourages women to take control of their health through simple measures like knowing one's risks and family history. While it's important to eat healthy, exercise, and not smoke, I also hope that you will continue to spread the message of "Go Red for Women"- heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States and we can beat it!"

"Every South Carolina woman needs to know about heart health," added Mrs. Sanford. Cardiovascular disease (CVD), which includes heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, and other diseases of the circulatory system, is South Carolina's leading killer for women among all racial and ethnic groups. In 2005 alone, 6,395 women died from CVD in South Carolina. Heart disease and stroke accounted for 40,600 hospitalizations for women in 2005 in South Carolina, with a total hospitalization cost of more than \$1.3 billion.



Are you at risk? The most common risk factors for cardiovascular disease are smoking, overweight or obesity, sedentary lifestyle, hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol.

Smoking: Cigarette smokers have a 70 percent greater chance of dying of heart disease than nonsmokers. One out of every five adult women in South Carolina smokes.

Overweight and Obesity: More than half of the women in South Carolina are overweight or obese. While almost half of Caucasian women in South Carolina are overweight or obese, three out of every four African American women fit into one of these two categories

Sedentary lifestyles: Less active, less physically fit persons have a 30 to 50 percent greater risk of developing high blood pressure. When it comes to physical activity, almost 60 percent of women in South Carolina are either inactive or are not regularly

active. Approximately one-fourth of women in South Carolina do not engage in physical activity during their leisure time. Physical inactivity is more common among African American women than Caucasian women.

Hypertension: People with hypertension (high blood pressure) have three to four times the risk of developing heart disease than those without high blood pressure. Nearly one in three women in South Carolina has high blood pressure.

Diabetes: Two-thirds of people with diabetes die of heart disease or stroke. One out of every ten women in South Carolina lives with diabetes.

High cholesterol: Lowering blood cholesterol results in a two-fold reduction of heart disease risk. One in three women in South Carolina has high cholesterol.

To learn more about The American Heart Association's Go Red For Women campaign in the Midlands, please visit www.goredforwomen.org.

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Information for this release was obtained from S.C. BRFSS, S.C. Vital Records, S.C. Hospital Discharge Data, American Heart Association, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Healthy SC Challenge is an outcome-based, cooperative effort aimed at encouraging individuals, communities and organizations across the state to show shared responsibility in developing innovative ways to improve the health of South Carolina's citizens. For more information about the Healthy SC Challenge, please visit www.healthysc.gov, or contact Curry Hagerty at 803-737-4772.